

DISTRICT AUDIT REPORT

Jefferson
County
School
District

January 23 - 28, 2005

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Sample School District District Audit Report

Kentucky Department of Education November 2005

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District Audit Executive Summary

Sample School District

/05-/05

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The Kentucky Department of Educati	on conducted a	a scholastic audit of the Sample	
School District during the period of _	/05	/05. Here are the most releva	ınt
facts and next step recommendations	from the audit.		

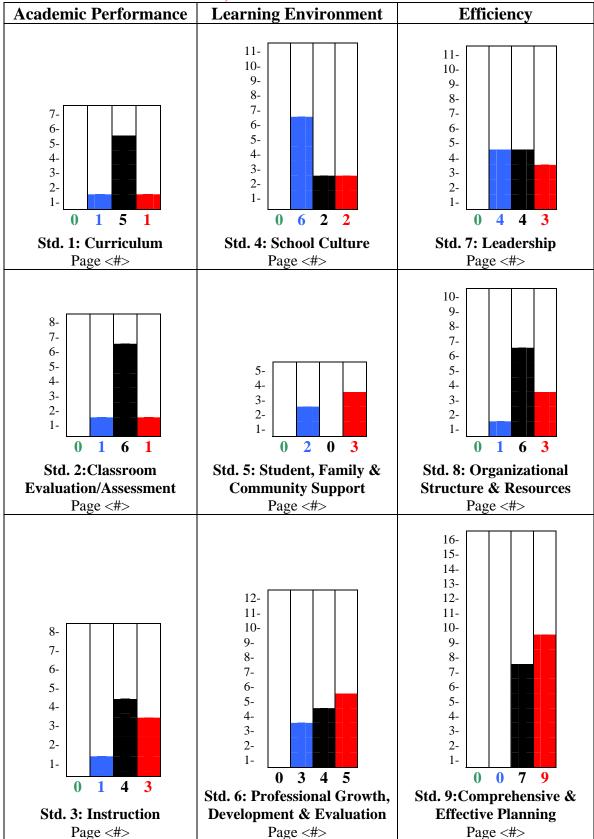
District Deficiencies and Next Steps in Supporting its Low-Performing **Schools**

Delibois	
1. Deficiency	The environment is not safe and secure and not conducive to learning.
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Next Steps	Policies and procedures related to visitors entering all buildings
	should be enforced immediately.
2. Deficiency	The district does not have a plan for teacher placement and retention
	for low performing schools.
Next Steps	The district must begin planning a teacher placement and retention
_	process for low performing schools to ensure that low performing
	schools are staffed with fully certified and highly qualified teachers in
	all content areas and grade levels.
3. Deficiency	The district has failed to meet the cultural, socio-economic and
	intellectual needs of all students.
Next Steps	The district should put in place a process to conduct cultural audits in
_	Assistance Level 3 schools. In order to meet the cultural, socio-
	economic and intellectual needs of all students, specific achievement
	gap strategies and activities should be identified for subpopulations,
	especially exceptional children and African-American male students.
4. Deficiency	The district does not adequately monitor the functioning school councils.

Next Steps	District level staff members should be assigned to regularly attend school council meetings on a rotating, quarterly basis to ensure that all school councils are fully functioning.
5. Deficiency	The district does not fully implement and monitor certified personnel evaluations.
Next Steps	District leadership should fully implement evaluation policies and procedures to ensure that individual growth plans and evaluations are completed according to state regulations and board policy and to maintain a focus on individual professional growth.
6. Deficiency	District leadership does not monitor evidence and impact of the comprehensive district and school improvement plan.
Next Steps	The school board should create a policy addressing quarterly implementation and impact checks with specific timelines to ensure monitoring and revision of the comprehensive district and school improvement plans. Checks for evidence and impact of the comprehensive district and school improvement plan implementation are necessary for improved student learning.

2005 Scholastic District Audit At-a-Glance Sample County School District

NOTE: Deficiencies are shown in black and red, with the total number of indicators shown for each standard.



Key:

- 1- Little or no development and implementation
- 2- Limited development or partial implementation
- 3- Fully functional and operational level of development and implementation
- 4- Exemplary level of development and implementation

STANDARDS AND INDICATORS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT **Sample County District**

Standard 1 - Academic Performance -

- Curriculum
 1.1a Curriculum is aligned. Academic Expectations, Core Content for Assessment, Transformations
- 1.1b District initiates, facilitates discussions among schools regarding curriculum standards
- 1.1c District initiates, facilitates discussions to eliminate unnecessary overlaps
- 1.1d Evidence of vertical communication, intentional focus on key curriculum transition points
- 1.1e School curriculum provides specific links to continuing education
- Systematic process for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing curriculum
- 1.1g Curriculum provides access to a common academic core

Standard 4 - Learning Environment - School Culture

- 4.1a Leadership support for a safe, orderly and equitable learning environment
- 4.1b Leadership creates experiences that all children can learn
- 4.1c Teachers hold high expectations for all students
- 4.1d Teachers and non-teaching staff involved in decision-making processes regarding teaching and learning
- 4.1e Teachers accept their role in student success/failure
- 4.1f School assigns staff...opportunities for ALL
- 4.1g Teachers communicate regularly with families
- 4.1h Evidence that the teachers and staff care
- 4.1i Multiple communication strategies...to all stakeholders
- 4.1j Evidence that student achievement is highly valued
- 4.1k The school/district provides support...needs of all students

Standard 7 - Efficiency - Leadership

- 7.1a Leadership has developed and sustained a shared vision
- 7.1b Leadership decisions focused on student academic data
- 7.1c All administrators have a growth plan
- 7.1d Evidence that the leadership team disaggregates data
- 7.1e Leadership ensures all instructional staff...access to curriculum related materials
- 7.1f Leadership ensures that time is protected...instructional
- 7.1g Leadership plans and allocates resources
- 7.1h School/district leadership provides policy and resource infrastructure
- 7.1i Process for the development and the implementation of council policy
- 7.1j SBDM council has an intentional focus on student academic performance
- 7.1k Principal demonstrates leadership skills in academic performance, learning environment, efficiency

Standard 2 - Academic Performance -Classroom Evaluation/Assessment

- 2.1a Classroom assessments frequent, rigorous, aligned with Kentucky's core content.
- 2.1b Teachers collaborate in the design of authentic assessment
- 2.1c Students can articulate what is required to be proficient
- 2.1d Test scores used to identify curriculum
- 2.1e Assessments designed to provide feedback on student learning for instructional purposes
- 2.1f Performance standards communicated. evident in classrooms, observable in student work
- 2.1g Assessment and Accountability Program is coordinated by school and district leadership
- 2.1h Samples of student work are analyzed

Standard 5 - Learning Environment - Student, Family and Community Support

- 5.1a Families and the community are active partners
- 5.1b All students have access to all the curriculum
- 5.1c Reduce barriers to learning
- 5.1d Students are provided opportunities to received additional assistance
- 5.1e School maintains an accurate student record system

Standard 8 - Efficiency - Organizational Structure and Resources

Organization of the School

- 8.1a School is organized...use of all available resources
- 8.1b All students have access to all the curriculum
- 8.1c Staff are allocated based upon the learning needs of all students
- 8.1d Staff makes efficient use of instructional time
- 8.1e Staff...planning vertically and horizontally across content areas
- 8.1f Schedule aligned with the school's mission

Resource Allocation and Integration

- 8.2a Clearly defined process (in accordance with the school council allocation formula)
- 8.2b Budget reflects decisions directed by an assessment of
- 8.2c Councils, school boards analyze funding and other resource requests
- 8.2d Resources are allocated and integrated to address student needs

Standard 3 - Academic Performance -**Instruction**

- 3.1a Varied instructional strategies used in all classrooms
- 3.1b Instructional strategies/activities aligned with goals
- 3.1c Strategies monitored/aligned to address learning styles
- 3.1d Teachers demonstrate content knowledge
- 3.1e Teachers incorporate technology in classrooms
- 3.1f Sufficient resources available
- 3.1g Teacher collaboration to review student
- 3.1h Homework is frequent, monitored and tied to instructional practice

Standard 6 - Learning Environment - Professional **Growth, Development and Evaluation**

Professional Development

- 6.1a Support for the long-term professional growth of the individual staff members
- 6.1b The school has an intentional plan for building instructional capacity
- 6.1c Staff development priorities...alignment...goals for student performance
- 6.1d Plans for school improvement directly connect goals for student learning
- 6.1e Professional development is on-going and job-embedded
- 6.1f Professional development planning connect student achievement data

Professional Growth and Evaluation

- 6.2a Clearly defined evaluation process
- 6.2b Leadership provides the fiscal resources for the appropriate professional growth
- 6.2c Employee evaluation and the individual professional growth plan to improve staff proficiency
- 6.2d A process of personnel evaluation which meets or exceeds standards set in statute
- 6.2e The school/district improvement plan identifies specific instructional needs
- 6.2f Evaluation process to provide teachers...change behavior and instructional practice

Standard 9 - Efficiency - Comprehensive and Effective **Planning**

Defining the School's Vision, Mission, Beliefs

9.1a Collaborative process used to develop the vision, beliefs, mission

Development of the Profile

- 9.2a Planning process involves collecting, managing and analyzing data
- 9.2b Use data for school improvement planning

Defining Desired Results for Student Learning

- 9.3a School and district plans reflect learning research, expectations for student learning
- 9.3b Analyze their students' unique learning needs
- 9.3c Results for student learning are defined

Analyzing Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness

- 9.4a Strengths and limitations are identified
- 9.4b Goals for building, strengthening capacity

Development of the Improvement Plan

- 9.5a Steps for school improvement aligned with improvement goals
- 9.5b Plan identifies resources, timelines & person responsible 9.5c Evaluating the effectiveness of improvement plan
- 9.5d Improvement plan is aligned with the school's profile, beliefs, mission, desired results

Implementation and Documentation

- 9.6a Plan is implemented as developed
- 9.6b School evaluates the degree to which it achieves the goals and objectives for student learning
- 9.6c The school evaluates the degree to which it achieves the expected impact
- 9.6d Evidence of attempts to sustain the commitment to continuous improvement

Recommendations to the Commissioner of Education

The audit teams have submitted these recommendations to the Commissioner of Education as required by 720 KRS 160.346:

[Insert here the recommendations. A sample might look like **one** of the following options.]

- "(1) The district audit team recommends that the school council of Sample Elementary School retain its authority."
- "(2) The district audit team recommends that the authority of the school council of Sample Middle School be transferred to the superintendent of the district."
- "(3) The school audit team recommends that the school council of Sample Elementary School retain its authority."
- "(4) The school audit team recommends that the authority of the school council of Sample Middle School be transferred to a highly skilled educator appointed by the Commissioner of Education and the school council remain in an advisory capacity."

Each school council has the right to appeal these recommendations within thirty days from the date they were notified of them. The findings of the assessment of each school council are appended to this report.

Based on the findings of the district scholastic audit, as required by state regulation 703 KAR 5:130 Section 7, the audit team recommends to the Commission of Education that:

[The regulation suggests the following possibilities:

- (1) No additional action is needed because the district is effectively implementing its school support plan, which reflects strategies to meet the needs of the Level 3 school;
- (2) Revisions to the school support plan are needed even though the district has effectively implemented its plan;
- (3) Revisions in implementation procedures are needed as implementation of the school support plan is not effective; or
- (4) A management audit as provided in KRS 158.785 and 703 KAR 3:205 is needed because the district has not effectively developed or implemented its school support plan.]

Conclusion

The district scholastic audit report contains many important findings district leadership should review. However, the audit team offers the following advice regarding what it considers the most critical steps the district must take immediately:

- Carefully read the scholastic audits for each school that triggered the audit.
- Depending on the recommendations regarding a change in school council
 authority, district leadership should immediately begin collaborative discussions
 with school leadership at each school and a representative of the Kentucky
 Department of Education regarding specific actions the named party will take to
 assume (or possibly continue) leadership responsibilities at each school.
- In the event the authority of one or more of the school councils involved in the district audit has been transferred to either the district superintendent or a state appointed highly skilled educator, state regulation 720 KRS 160.346 requires that, within thirty (30) days, the party to whom school council authority has been transferred must consult with stakeholders at the school including parents, the principal, certified and classified staff to prepare a plan for developing a capacity for sound school-based decision making at each school. The plan is to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education for approval. A progress report on the implementation of the plan must be submitted to the Commissioner every six months until a school's right to establish a school council or its full authority is restored, as provided for in the regulation.
- Regardless of the status of the respective school councils, district leadership, school leadership at each school and a representative of the Kentucky Department of Education should begin immediately to collaborate on the development of an enforceable assistance plan for each of the Level 3 schools that triggered the district audit. The assistance plans should contain aggressive and creative approaches to all the critical issues identified in the scholastic audit for each school.
- Under certain conditions as described in state regulation 703 KAR 5:120 Sections 3 and 4, district leadership could be expected to conduct a personnel evaluation of every administrator and certified staff member of the Level 3 schools.

Focus on Student Academic Performance

It will be the task of district leadership to read and prioritize the results from this report to plan for improving student performance, please consider the following questions to guide your decision making process when assigning priorities for school and district improvement.

- 1. Are the right decisions being made for all children, including staff assignments, student placement and curriculum design and delivery?
- 2. With all the resources and support services available to all schools, why are some schools successful while others need assistance?
- 3. Why are gaps between schools (P-12) so varied?
- 4. Why are there subgroup gaps in student achievement between and within schools?

To ensure that the implications of this report and our recommendations are understood and implemented, the following additional actions should be taken:

- Disseminate the findings and recommendations of this report broadly to constituents and facilitate the questions above to arrive at root causes to aid in determining priorities for planning. Use the report for learning, reflection and action.
- Consider the implications of the report for each school's work and policies.
- Build greater understanding of new approaches to professional development and address the ways that stakeholders will have to work differently to improve instruction.
- Identify the implications of this report for stakeholders, such as principals, board members, school council members, colleges of education, and state policymakers.
- Acknowledge and address the fact that current practice does not provide adequate opportunity for teachers and principals to carry out the new demands of their work, to analyze data and diagnose student needs, to determine the efficacy of their own practice, to align their instruction to new curriculum standards and to collaborate regularly with peers.

The Legal Basis for the District Audit

State regulation 703 KAR 5:130 Section 5 (3) requires a district audit whenever one or more schools in the district is classified as Level 3 for two or more consecutive accountability cycles. The following school or schools were classified as Level 3 for two or more consecutive accountability cycles:

Sample Middle School Sample Elementary School

For this reason a scholastic audit of this school district was conducted by the Kentucky Department of Education.

The Legal Responsibilities of a District with Level 3 Schools

State regulation 703 KAR 5:130 Section 5 (2) requires that a local school district containing a school that is classified as Level 3 that was not classified as Level 3 the previous accountability cycle shall modify its district consolidated plan by including a specific support plan designed to assist each Level 3 school in improving its academic achievement. The support plan is to address each of the areas listed in Section 6 of the 703 KAR 5:130 Section 5 (2) administrative regulation, which appears below:

(2) A local school district containing a school that is classified as Level 3 that was not classified as Level 3 the previous accountability cycle shall modify its district consolidated plan by including a specific support plan designed to assist each Level 3 school in improving its academic achievement. The plan shall address each of the areas listed in Section 6 of this administrative regulation and shall be sent to the local board of education members and to the Level 3 school council members or, if none exists, the principal, for approval.

Section 6. A local school district shall address the following areas in its school support plan:

- (1) Instructional leadership shall include evidence that the local school district provides:
- (a) Instructional staff access to curriculum-related materials and training necessary to use curricular and data resources relating to the goals for Kentucky public schools established in KRS 158.645 and 158.6451 and the academic expectations established in 703 KAR 4:060 and the school's performance trends, which include state assessment data and other student achievement performance measures identified by the district:
- (b) A professional development planning process that results in training activities provided for the certified staff within the goals established in KRS 158.6451 and the local needs assessment required in 704 KAR 3:035, annual professional development plan. The district shall include evidence that it equitably and effectively distributes professional development resources and has designed a district professional development program based on student achievement data: and
- (c) A structure for instructional improvement including evidence that the local school district is actively supporting a systematic, school improvement planning process involving appropriate stakeholder groups, including parents, business representatives, and the general public, and the district is using all available and appropriate data;
- (2) Financial services and support shall include evidence that district resources have been distributed to each school equitably and consistently in accordance with the requirements of 702 KAR 3:246, School council allocation formula. The district shall also demonstrate that decisions about discretionary funds and other available resources not included in the school allocation formula are directed by an assessment of need or a required plan, all of which are data driven;
- (3) Safe and secure instructional facilities shall include evidence of adequate and equitable maintenance of facilities. In addition, safe and secure instructional facilities shall include evidence that the school district has reviewed and assisted in the implementation of the school-based safety plans dealing directly with issues related to discipline and a safe school environment; and
- (4) An effective certified employee evaluation program shall include evidence that the evaluation of the principal and certified staff has been implemented in a regular and timely manner consistent with the district's approved evaluation plan submitted under KRS 156.101 and that the evaluation process focuses on improving instruction.
- Section 7. The district evaluation team shall submit a report, including its recommendations, to the Commissioner of Education, the district superintendent, and the local board of education within two (2) weeks of its review. The report shall be presented by a member of the district evaluation team at a local board of education meeting with opportunity for public comment. The district evaluation team recommendations may include the following:
- (1) No additional action is needed because the district is effectively implementing its school support plan which reflects strategies to meet the needs of the Level 3 school;

- (2) Revisions to the school support plan are needed even though the district has effectively implemented its plan;
- (3) Revisions in implementation procedures are needed as implementation of the school support plan is not effective; or
- (4) A management audit as provided in KRS 158.785 and 703 KAR 3:205 is needed because the district has not effectively developed or implemented its school support plan.

There are additional responsibilities and consequences for local school districts when one or more schools are classified as Level 3 for two or more consecutive accountability cycles. State regulation 703 KAR 5:130 Section 5 (3) requires that a local school district be subject to a district scholastic audit, which shall among other things examines the district's implementation of the previous accountability cycle's school support plan and evaluates district operations using the "Standards and Indicators for School Improvement" instrument developed for school district audits and reviews. Each Level 3 also shall receive a second scholastic audit.

The Unique Features of a District Scholastic Audit

The district schools that triggered the district audit are given a second consecutive scholastic audit, which becomes part of the evidence for this report. In addition to applying the "Standards and Indicators for School Improvement" to these schools, the audit team conducts an additional assessment of the functionality of the school council in each school. The recommendation of the school and district audit teams regarding the future role of the school council in each Level 3 school is based on this additional assessment as well as findings from the "Standards and Indicators for School Improvement" administered at each school and at the district level.

The Sources of Evidence for the Findings

District leadership provides the audit team an enormous amount of information, data and documents within which the team looks for evidence that an Indicator for a Standard is present to some degree. Each of the eighty-eight Indicators are ranked from 1 (the lowest) to 4 (the highest) with a three representing proficient performance on the Indicator. In addition to the materials provided to the audit team, personal interviews are conducted with district leadership and staff, a select group of people in the Level 3 schools and a similarly situated achieving school, randomly selected students, parents, school council members and other stakeholder representatives. The scholastic audit reports for every school in the district that has been classified at least once as a Level 3 school is reviewed to identify patterns and differences that might inform the team about the role the district leadership has played in each case. District assistance plans for these schools are also reviewed. In addition to the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement protocol, the team also used a Kentucky Department of Education approved protocol for assessing school councils.

The Consequences of a District Scholastic Audit

Under state regulation 720 KAR 160.346 both the school and district audit teams must determine if the school-based decision making council in each school should have its authority transferred either to the local district superintendent or a highly skilled educator assigned by the Kentucky Department of Education. State regulation 720 KAR 160.346 specifically requires the school and district audit teams to include in their review the following:

The school audit *must* include in its review the following:

- 2. The functioning of the school and the school council;
- 3. Implementation of the previous school improvement plan;

- 4. The interaction and relationship between the superintendent, central office personnel, and the council; and
- 5. Recommend to the Commissioner of Education whether the school council's authority should be: (a) retained, (b) transferred to the Superintendent, or (c) transferred to an HSE.
- 6. If the audit team recommends a transfer of the school council's authority, it must also recommend whether the council should continue to function in an advisory role or be disbanded.

The district audit *must* include in its review the following:

- 1. The functioning of the school district;
- 2. The interaction and relationship between the superintendent, central office personnel, school board members, and the council;
- 3. Implementation of the school assistance plan; and
- 4. Recommend to the Commissioner of Education whether the school council's authority should be: (a) retained, (b) transferred to the Superintendent, or (c) transferred to an HSE.
- 5. If the audit team recommends a transfer of the school council's authority, it must also recommend whether the council should continue to function in an advisory role or be disbanded.

District Audit Progress Tracking Grid

A safe and secure environment is essential for an effective learning community. Policies and procedures related to visitors entering all buildings should be enforced immediately.

Status	Desired Changes	Obstacles to Change	Action Steps to Overcoming Obstacles	Timeline/Person Responsible

To ensure that low performing schools are staffed with fully certified and highly qualified teachers in all content areas and grade levels, the district should begin planning a teacher placement and retention process for low performing schools.

Status	Desired Changes	Obstacles to Change	Action Steps to Overcoming Obstacles	Timeline/Person Responsible

In order to meet the cultural, socio-economic and intellectual needs of all students, specific achievement gap strategies and activities should be identified for subpopulations, especially exceptional children and African-American male students. The district should put in place a process to conduct cultural audits in Level 3 schools.

<u>Status</u>	Desired Changes	Obstacles to Change	Action Steps to Overcoming Obstacles	Timeline/Person Responsible
			Obstacles	

To ensure that all school councils are fully functioning, district level staff members should be assigned to regularly attend school council meetings on a rotating, quarterly basis.

	Obst	acles	esponsible

To maintain a focus on individual professional growth, district leadership should fully implement evaluation policies and procedures to ensure that individual growth plans and evaluations are completed according to state regulations and board policy.

<u>Status</u>	Desired Changes	Obstacles to Change	Action Steps to Overcoming Obstacles	Timeline/Person Responsible

Checks for evidence and impact of the comprehensive district and school improvement plan implementation are necessary for improved student learning. The school board should consider a policy addressing quarterly implementation and impact checks with specific timelines to ensure monitoring and revision of the comprehensive district and school improvement plans.

Status	Desired Changes	Obstacles to Change	Action Steps to Overcoming Obstacles	Timeline/Person Responsible